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IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Inventorship.....Simon
Applicant Microsoft Corporation
Attorney's Docket No. MS1-406US
Title: Controlled-Content Recoverable Blinded Certificates

TRANSMITTAL LETTER AND CERTIFICATE OF MAILING

To: Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks
Washington, D.C. 20231

From: Allan T. Sponseller (509) 324-9256
Lee & Hayes, PLLC
421 W. Riverside Avenue, Suite 500
Spokane, WA 99201

The following enumerated items accompany this transmittal letter and are being submitted for the matter identified in the above caption.

1. Transmittal Letter with Certificate of Mailing included.
2. PTO Return Postcard Receipt
3. Check in the Amount of \$1,144.00
4. Fee Transmittal
5. New patent application (title page plus 35 pages, including claims 1-30 & Abstract)
6. Executed Declaration
7. 7 sheets of formal drawings (Figs. 1-8)
8. Assignment w/Recordation Cover Sheet

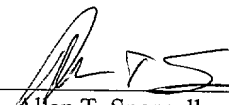
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Date: 4/5/00

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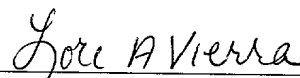
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Date: 4/5/00

By:


Lori A. Vierra

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

APPLICATION FOR LETTERS PATENT

Controlled-Content Recoverable Blinded Certificates

Inventor(s):
Daniel R. Simon

ATTORNEY'S DOCKET NO. MS1-406US

TECHNICAL FIELD

This invention relates to cryptography. More particularly, the invention relates to generating and using controlled-content recoverable blinded certificates.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

The number of people using computers, as well as the tasks they are used to perform, is continually increasing. The Internet is one example of such an increase – more and more people are communicating with one another, researching information, and purchasing goods and services over the Internet. However, accompanying this increasing usage of computers and the Internet is an increasing concern about user-privacy, including concerns that individual's purchasing and researching (or "web surfing") behavior is being monitored by others.

A user can connect to the Internet at any time of day or night and purchase electronic content that is immediately transferred to his or her computer (a process referred to as "downloading"). Examples of such content include music (e.g., MP3 compressed audio files), text (e.g., electronic books), software applications, etc. In order to obtain electronic content over the Internet, the seller or other provider of such content often desires some assurances regarding the security of the device requesting the content (e.g., the user's computer). Such assurances indicate to the seller/provider that the electronic content obtained will not be used inappropriately. For example, an assurance that music files transferred to the device will not be improperly copied to another device.

Most users are willing to abide by such "proper usage" requirements for the content they download. However, many are unwilling to forgo any personal

1 privacy in order to do so. For example, many users would be willing to accept a
2 mechanism that gave the seller/provider the desired assurances regarding the
3 security of their computer (or other device), but do not want their identity revealed
4 in order to do so.

5 One way in which these assurances can be made to the seller/provider is for
6 the requesting device to authenticate itself to the seller/provider. Such
7 authentication typically involves the requesting device identifying itself to the
8 seller/provider, either directly or indirectly via the authentication mechanism.
9 This identification, however, can also allow the user's behavior to be tracked. For
10 example, if a user continually uses the same public key for public key encryption
11 when obtaining electronic content, then the user can be tracked using that key.
12 Given the ability to track users using such mechanisms, they are unlikely to
13 achieve widespread user acceptance.

14 The invention described below addresses these disadvantages by providing
15 controlled-content recoverable blinded certificates.

16 17 **SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION**

18 In a cryptographic system, a certificate is used to provide information
19 regarding a client device. The certificate is blindly signed by a certifying authority
20 to preserve the anonymity of the client device. However, information is encoded
21 into the signature so that a content server can readily verify attributes of the client
22 device.

23 According to one aspect of the invention, a public key cryptographic
24 system is used in which the client device can generate new public/private key pairs
25 at will. A new public key is incorporated into a certificate and blindly signed by

1 the certifying authority. As the certificate is blinded, the certifying authority does
2 not know the exact content of what is being signed, but does encode into the
3 signature the same information as was in the signature of the last certificate it
4 signed for the client device. By changing public keys the client device can prevent
5 other devices from tracking it based on its public key, and by having the new
6 certificate (with the new public key) blindly signed the client device can prevent
7 the certifying authority from equating the previous public key to the new public
8 key.

9 According to another aspect of the invention, the client device is
10 recoverable from a failure of the client device during the process of obtaining a
11 new public key. Such a failure could result in a loss of the information used to
12 generate the new public keys. The client device can recover from such a failure by
13 using a fixed "pseudo-random" number generator to generate "random" numbers
14 based on a fixed seed value. The client device can readily re-generate its previous
15 public/private key pairs using this number generator. Each generated public key is
16 submitted to a certificate archive to determine whether a current valid certificate
17 exists for that public key. The generation and checking process continues until a
18 public/private key pair is generated for which a valid certificate exists.

19 20 **BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS**

21 The present invention is illustrated by way of example and not limitation in
22 the figures of the accompanying drawings. The same numbers are used
23 throughout the figures to reference like components and/or features.

24 Fig. 1 shows a client/server network system and environment in accordance
25 with one embodiment of the invention.

1 Fig. 2 shows a general example of a computer that can be used in
2 accordance with the invention.

3 Fig. 3 illustrates an exemplary certificate that can be used in accordance
4 with the invention.

5 Fig. 4 is a block diagram illustrating an exemplary data flow for blindly
6 signing certificates and using the certificates to obtain electronic content according
7 to one embodiment of the invention.

8 Fig. 5 illustrates an example of the bit encoding according to one
9 embodiment of the invention.

10 Fig. 6 is a flowchart illustrating an exemplary process for generating a new
11 blindly signed certificate in accordance with one implementation of the invention.

12 Fig. 7 is a flowchart illustrating an exemplary process for obtaining content
13 using a new signed certificate in accordance with one implementation of the
14 invention.

15 Fig. 8 is a flowchart illustrating an exemplary process for restoring a key
16 pair generator to its proper state according to one embodiment of the invention.

17 18 19 **DETAILED DESCRIPTION**

20 The discussion herein assumes that the reader is familiar with cryptography.
21 For a basic introduction of cryptography, the reader is directed to a text written by
22 Bruce Schneier and entitled "Applied Cryptography: Protocols, Algorithms, and
23 Source Code in C," published by John Wiley & Sons with copyright 1994 (or
24 second edition with copyright 1996).

Network Structure

Fig. 1 shows a client/server network system and environment in accordance with one embodiment of the invention. Generally, the system includes one or more client devices 102, one or more content servers 104, one or more revocation servers 106, and one or more certifying authorities 108. The client devices 102, servers 104 and 106, and certifying authorities 108 communicate with one another over a data communications network. The data communications network in Fig. 1 is a public network 110, such as the Internet. The data communications network might also include local-area networks and/or private wide-area networks, and can include both wired and wireless sections. Alternatively, one or more of client devices 102, servers 104 and 106, and certifying authorities 108 may communicate with each other directly rather than via network 110.

Client device 102 includes an original certificate 112 that identifies various security-related attributes of client device 102. In the illustrated example, certificate 112 is part of a central processing unit (CPU) of client device 102 and is incorporated into the CPU when the CPU is manufactured (or alternatively when client device 102 is manufactured). Client device 102 also includes a current certificate 114. Current certificate 114 is initially the same as original certificate 112, but may be subsequently changed, as discussed in more detail below.

Client device 102 further includes a key pair generator 116 that generates a key pair 118 including a public key and a private key for the device 102. In the illustrated example, generator 116 generates a key pair in a conventional manner according to the well-known RSA (Rivest, Shamir, and Adelman) encryption technique. A random number seed 120 provides a fixed seed value to be used by

generator 116 in generating a key pair and recovering its state if necessary, as discussed in more detail below.

Client device 102 also includes a public key 122 for certifying authority 108. Public key 122 allows client device 102 to establish a secure communications link to certifying authority 108 via network 110, as discussed in more detail below.

Content server 104 includes various electronic content 124 that can be transferred to client 102 via network 110 (also referred to as “downloading”). Content 124 represents any type of electronic content, such as audio content (e.g., songs), video content (e.g., movies), textual content (e.g., articles, books, magazines or newspapers), software (e.g., complete applications, upgrades, or fixes), etc. Content 124 can include different titles (e.g., multiple different songs and software applications) as well as different versions of the same content (e.g., different quality versions of the same song). To download content 124, client device 102 requests the appropriate content 124 from content server 104. Based on the requested content and the various attributes of client device 102 (e.g., its security attributes), content server 104 determines which content (or which version of particular content), if any, it will transfer to client device 102.

Certifying authority 108 certifies public keys generated by client device 102. This certification provides a verification to content server 104 that the public key presented to server 104 by client 102 is actually from client 102 and that client 102 has the attributes that it claims to have. Certifying authority 108 includes a secure connection module 126 to establish a secure connection to client 102 via network 110, and a signature module 128 that certifies the public keys generated by client device 102 by “signing” the keys, as discussed in more detail below.

1 Certifying authority 108 also includes a certificate archive 130 that is a record of
2 currently valid (non-revoked) certificates that have been signed by certifying
3 authority 108. A new certificate is added to certificate archive 130 and the
4 corresponding previous certificate removed from certificate archive 130 by client
5 device 102 (or alternatively certifying authority 108) when the new certificate is
6 created or signed. Certificate archive 130 can be used by client 102 in the event it
7 is recovering the state of key pair generator 116 or the current key pair 118, as
8 discussed in more detail below.

9 Revocation server 106 maintains a certificate revocation list 132 that
10 identifies revoked certificates. Certificates of client device 102, as well as other
11 client devices coupled to network 110, identify the public key and other attributes
12 of those devices. Certifying authority 108, in conjunction with client device 102,
13 can generate and certify a new certificate having a new public key. During the
14 certification process, client device 102 (or alternatively certifying authority 108)
15 also revokes the previous certificate used by client device 102. The previous
16 certificate is revoked so that the previous certificate (and thus the previous public
17 key) of client device 102 is no longer valid. Certificate revocation list 132 is a
18 record of these revoked certificates. Alternatively, previous certificates may not
19 be revoked.

20 21 **Exemplary Computer Environment**

22 In the discussion below, the invention will be described in the general
23 context of computer-executable instructions, such as program modules, being
24 executed by one or more conventional personal computers. Generally, program
25 modules include routines, programs, objects, components, data structures, etc. that

perform particular tasks or implement particular abstract data types. Moreover, those skilled in the art will appreciate that the invention may be practiced with other computer system configurations, including hand-held devices, multiprocessor systems, microprocessor-based or programmable consumer electronics, network PCs, minicomputers, mainframe computers, and the like. In a distributed computer environment, program modules may be located in both local and remote memory storage devices.

Alternatively, the invention can be implemented in hardware or a combination of hardware, software, and/or firmware. For example, the invention can be implemented using one or more application specific integrated circuits (ASICs).

Fig. 2 shows a general example of a computer 142 that can be used in accordance with the invention. Computer 142 is shown as an example of a computer that can perform the functions of client device 102, content server 104, revocation server 106, or certifying authority 108 of Fig. 1. Computer 142 includes one or more processors or processing units 144, a system memory 146, and a system bus 148 that couples various system components including the system memory 146 to processors 144.

The bus 148 represents one or more of any of several types of bus structures, including a memory bus or memory controller, a peripheral bus, an accelerated graphics port, and a processor or local bus using any of a variety of bus architectures. The system memory includes read only memory (ROM) 150 and random access memory (RAM) 152. A basic input/output system (BIOS) 154, containing the basic routines that help to transfer information between elements within computer 142, such as during start-up, is stored in ROM 150. Computer

142 further includes a hard disk drive 156 for reading from and writing to a hard disk, not shown, a magnetic disk drive 158 for reading from and writing to a removable magnetic disk 160, and an optical disk drive 162 for reading from or writing to a removable optical disk 164 such as a CD ROM or other optical media. The hard disk drive 156, magnetic disk drive 158, and optical disk drive 162 are connected to the system bus 148 by an SCSI interface 166 or some other appropriate interface. The drives and their associated computer-readable media provide nonvolatile storage of computer readable instructions, data structures, program modules and other data for computer 142. Although the exemplary environment described herein employs a hard disk, a removable magnetic disk 160 and a removable optical disk 164, it should be appreciated by those skilled in the art that other types of computer readable media which can store data that is accessible by a computer, such as magnetic cassettes, flash memory cards, digital video disks, random access memories (RAMs) read only memories (ROM), and the like, may also be used in the exemplary operating environment.

A number of program modules may be stored on the hard disk, magnetic disk 160, optical disk 164, ROM 150, or RAM 152, including an operating system 170, one or more application programs 172, other program modules 174, and program data 176. A user may enter commands and information into computer 142 through input devices such as keyboard 178 and pointing device 180. Other input devices (not shown) may include a microphone, joystick, game pad, satellite dish, scanner, or the like. These and other input devices are connected to the processing unit 144 through an interface 182 that is coupled to the system bus. A monitor 184 or other type of display device is also connected to the system bus 148 via an interface, such as a video adapter 186. In addition to the monitor,

1 personal computers typically include other peripheral output devices (not shown)
2 such as speakers and printers.

3 Computer 142 operates in a networked environment using logical
4 connections to one or more remote computers, such as a remote computer 188.
5 The remote computer 188 may be another personal computer, a server, a router, a
6 network PC, a peer device or other common network node, and typically includes
7 many or all of the elements described above relative to computer 142, although
8 only a memory storage device 190 has been illustrated in Fig. 2. The logical
9 connections depicted in Fig. 2 include a local area network (LAN) 192 and a wide
10 area network (WAN) 194. Such networking environments are commonplace in
11 offices, enterprise-wide computer networks, intranets, and the Internet. In the
12 described embodiment of the invention, remote computer 188 executes an Internet
13 Web browser program such as the "Internet Explorer" Web browser manufactured
14 and distributed by Microsoft Corporation of Redmond, Washington.

15 When used in a LAN networking environment, computer 142 is connected
16 to the local network 192 through a network interface or adapter 196. When used
17 in a WAN networking environment, computer 142 typically includes a modem 198
18 or other means for establishing communications over the wide area network 194,
19 such as the Internet. The modem 198, which may be internal or external, is
20 connected to the system bus 148 via a serial port interface 168. In a networked
21 environment, program modules depicted relative to the personal computer 142, or
22 portions thereof, may be stored in the remote memory storage device. It will be
23 appreciated that the network connections shown are exemplary and other means of
24 establishing a communications link between the computers may be used.

1 Generally, the data processors of computer 142 are programmed by means
2 of instructions stored at different times in the various computer-readable storage
3 media of the computer. Programs and operating systems are typically distributed,
4 for example, on floppy disks or CD-ROMs. From there, they are installed or
5 loaded into the secondary memory of a computer. At execution, they are loaded at
6 least partially into the computer's primary electronic memory. The invention
7 described herein includes these and other various types of computer-readable
8 storage media when such media contain instructions or programs for implementing
9 the steps described below in conjunction with a microprocessor or other data
10 processor. The invention also includes the computer itself when programmed
11 according to the methods and techniques described below. Furthermore, certain
12 sub-components of the computer may be programmed to perform the functions
13 and steps described below. The invention includes such sub-components when
14 they are programmed as described. In addition, the invention described herein
15 includes data structures, described below, as embodied on various types of
16 memory media.

17 For purposes of illustration, programs and other executable program
18 components such as the operating system are illustrated herein as discrete blocks,
19 although it is recognized that such programs and components reside at various
20 times in different storage components of the computer, and are executed by the
21 data processor(s) of the computer.

22 **Client Certificates**

23
24 Client device 102 can provide information about itself to content server 104
25 via a certificate previously signed by a certifying authority. Fig. 3 illustrates an

1 exemplary certificate 210 that includes a public key 212 and one or more attributes
2 214. Public key 212 is the current public key (in accordance with RSA
3 cryptography) being used by client device 102. Attributes 214 identify various
4 characteristics of client device 102, such as what type of device client 102 is or
5 how client 102 was constructed. For example, attributes may identify client
6 device 102 as a particular type of device (e.g., a personal computer with an Intel®
7 microprocessor, a personal MP3 audio player, or an Internet browsing device such
8 as a WebTV® terminal or a gaming console), or a device with particular security
9 characteristics (e.g., a computer with an Intel® microprocessor built to run only
10 the Microsoft® Windows NT® operating system). In the illustrated example,
11 attributes 214 include a security level 216 of client device 102 (e.g., a numeric
12 level of a predefined set of security levels) and an identifier 218 of certifying
13 authority 108. Additionally, an expiration date and time 220 may be included in
14 attributes 214, identifying when certificate 210 will expire (no longer be valid).

15 Client device 102 includes a processor (such as processing unit 144 of Fig.
16 2) that is capable of performing cryptographic functions, such as signing,
17 encrypting, decrypting, and authenticating. An additional cryptographic
18 accelerator (not shown) may also be included to assist the processor with intensive
19 mathematical computations commonly involved in cryptographic functions.

20 The processor manufacturer equips processor 144 with a pair of public and
21 private keys 118 that are unique to the processor 144, and thus unique to device
22 102. Other physical implementations may include storing the key on an external
23 device to which the main processor has privileged access (where the stored secrets
24 are inaccessible to arbitrary application or operating system code). The private
25

The processor manufacturer also issues a signed original certificate 112 testifying that it produced the processor according to a known specification and including the attributes 214 of Fig. 3. Generally, the certificate 112 testifies that the manufacturer created the key pair 118, placed the key pair onto the processor 144, and then destroyed its own knowledge of the private key, or alternatively that the private key was generated internally in the device, and the public key was obtained from it under controlled circumstances by the manufacturer. In this way, nobody but the client device 102 knows the client device private key; the same key is not issued to other processors. The certificate can in principle be stored on a separate physical device but still logically belongs to the processor with the corresponding key. Alternatively, the manufacturer of client device 102 rather than the processor 144 may equip client device 102 with the public/private key pair 118 and certificate 112.

In order for the client device 102 to cryptographically sign a message (e.g., a certificate), its public key (from key pair 118) is made known to the device(s) that will receive the message. The public key can be included in non-encrypted form along with the signed message, or may otherwise be made publicly known. Making the public key publicly known, however, can result in the loss of at least some anonymity of the client device 102. If the client device 102 continually uses the same public key, then that public key can become associated with device 102 and the transactions conducted, information obtained, etc. can be tracked based on the public key.

1 The invention solves this problem by allowing client device 102 to change
2 key pair 118. A new key pair can be generated by generator 116 and the new
3 public key incorporated into a certificate that is forwarded to certifying authority
4 108 for certification. The certificate is blinded so that certifying authority 108
5 does not know the value of the new public key and thus cannot associate the new
6 public key with the previous public key. However, the certifying authority 108
7 digitally signs the certificate from client device 102 and encodes some (or all) of
8 the same attributes into the new certificate (with the new public key) as were
9 associated with the previous certificate used by client device 102. Thus, client
10 device 102 is able to generate a new key pair and have the public key certified as
11 having the same attributes as the previous key without revealing any information
12 regarding the identity of client device 102.

13 Fig. 4 is a block diagram illustrating an exemplary data flow for blindly
14 signing certificates and using the certificates to obtain electronic content according
15 to one embodiment of the invention. The client device 102 and certifying
16 authority 108 establish a secure connection 232 between themselves (e.g., via
17 network 110 of Fig. 1). The client device 102 generates a new key pair,
18 incorporates the new public key into a new certificate, blinds the new certificate,
19 and transmits the blinded certificate 234 to certifying authority 108 via the secure
20 connection 232. Client device 102 also requests that certifying authority 108 sign
21 the certificate indicating that client device 102 has all or many of the same
22 attributes as the previous certificate used by client device 102. Certifying
23 authority 108 verifies that the blinded certificate 234 is to have the same attributes
24 as the previous certificate based on information encoded in the previous signed
25 certificate. If certifying authority 108 can verify such, then it issues a new signed

1 certificate 236 for blinded certificate 234; otherwise it will not issue signed
2 certificate 236.

3 Signed certificate 236 is received by client 102 and stored as current
4 certificate 114 of Fig. 1. Signed certificate 236 gives client 102 a valid certificate
5 in which is encoded various attributes. However, since certifying authority 108
6 issued signed certificate 236 based on a blinded certificate, certifying authority
7 108 has no knowledge of what the public key in that certificate is.

8 Client 102 can then use its new public key to obtain electronic content from
9 content server 104. Client 102 forwards the current certificate and a request for
10 content 238 to content server 104. Alternatively, a secure connection between
11 client 102 and content server 104 may be established analogous to secure
12 connection 232 between client 102 and certifying authority 108. Content server
13 104 evaluates the request and certificate 238 to determine what content, if any, to
14 deliver to client 102 and/or how to deliver the content to client 102 (e.g., what fee
15 to charge, how to collect the fee, what additional security precautions to insist on,
16 etc.). This determination is made by content server 104, at least in part, by
17 evaluating the attributes encoded in the certificate received from client 102. Based
18 on its evaluation, content server 104 forwards the appropriate requested content
19 240 in the appropriate manner to client device 102.

20 The invention makes use of public key cryptography to encrypt and decrypt
21 information as well as to digitally sign and verify messages. The invention is
22 described using the well-known RSA algorithm. Alternatively, other public key
23 cryptographic algorithms could be used, such as well-known elliptic curve
24 cryptosystems or well-known Diffie-Hellman key agreement protocols.
25

Secure connection 232 is established by client 102 and certifying authority 108 generating a session key. According to one implementation, the session key is generated using the client public key and the certifying authority public key. The client 102 selects a random value, encrypts the random value with the certifying authority public key 122 of Fig. 1, and sends the encrypted random value to certifying authority 108 along with current certificate 114 (which includes the client public key). The certifying authority 108 also selects a random value, encrypts the random value with the client public key, and sends the encrypted random value to client 102. Each of the client 102 and certifying authority 108 can decrypt the encrypted random values they receive using their respective private keys. The client 102 and certifying authority 108 then combine the two random values in some known manner (e.g., adding the two values, concatenating the two values, etc.) to generate the session key. All subsequent communications between client 102 and certifying authority 108 via secure connection 232 are encrypted in a conventional manner using this session key.

The public and private keys are generated and used in accordance with RSA. Using RSA, two large prime numbers p and q are selected and multiplied to generate a product n . A value e is also generated and is relatively prime to $(p-1)(q-1)$. A value of d , which is the inverse of e is also determined, such that:

$$ed = 1 \bmod (p-1)(q-1)$$

The private key then is the pair p and q , or alternatively d , and the public key is the pair n and e .

A message m (e.g., a series of numbers representing a textual message, such as the ASCII values for alphanumerics) can be encrypted to generate $m_{encrypt}$ via the following formula:

$$m_{encrypt} = m^e \pmod n$$

The intended recipient of the message knows the private key and can easily decrypt the message using the following formula:

$$m = (m_{encrypt}^e)^d \pmod n$$

However, no known algorithm can efficiently decrypt the encrypted message $m_{encrypt}$ without knowing the private key.

A message m can similarly be digitally signed by the owner of the private key to generate m_{signed} via the following formula:

$$m_{signed} = m^d \pmod n$$

Anyone else that knows the public key can decrypt the signed message m_{signed} and verify that it was indeed signed using the private key corresponding to the public key using the following formula:

$$m = (m_{signed}^d)^e \pmod n$$

The invention can also have a message m be blindly signed. A blindly signed message is one that is digitally signed without the device doing the signing having any knowledge of the underlying message. Thus, client 102 can have certifying authority 108 sign a message m (e.g., including a new public key) without certifying authority 108 having any knowledge of the actual content of message m (e.g., the new public key). The blinding process is carried out by client 102 generating a value x and multiplying the message m by the value x^e . The blinded message mx^e is then sent to certifying authority 108, which signs the blinded message according to the following formula:

$$mx_{signed} = (mx^e)^d \pmod n$$

This value is returned to client 102, which can easily generate the signed message $(m^d \pmod n)$ according to the following:

1 integers which were not included in e . Each message (e.g., a certificate) would
2 then be signed twice, once with the value of e and once with the value of e_2 . Both
3 of these signed messages would then be verified by content server 104 in
4 determining whether to provide content to client device 102.

5 The values of the integers e^i should be chosen to be relatively prime to $(p-$
6 $1)(q-1)$. This can be accomplished, for example, by choosing values of p and q
7 such that $(p-1)$ and $(q-1)$ are both twice a prime number, and skipping the value
8 two when choosing e^i values.

9 Additionally, with the value of e selected, the corresponding value of d ,
10 which is a product of multiple integers d^i , can be readily determined. The value of
11 each integer d^i can be determined by calculating the value such that $e^i d^i = 1 \bmod (p-$
12 $1)(q-1)$.

13 Fig. 5 illustrates an example of the bit encoding according to one
14 embodiment of the invention. In the illustrated example, up to fifteen different
15 integers e^i are included. In the example encoding 248, the first, fourth, ninth and
16 twelfth integers e^i are included, resulting in the encoded value of
17 100100001001000. In the example encoding 250, the second, third, fifth, sixth,
18 seventh, eighth, tenth, eleventh, thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth integers e^i are
19 included, resulting in the encoded value of 011011110110111.

20 The information encoded into the digital signature identifies various
21 attributes of client device 102. In one implementation, each of the attributes 216,
22 218, and 220 included in certificate 210 of Fig. 3 are encoded into the digital
23 signature. The encoding can further be seen from the following example. Assume
24 that eight different security levels are predefined, one of which is identified as
25 security level 216 of certificate 210. Three different values e^i (e.g., e^1 , e^2 , and e^3)

are used to encode the security level 216 into the signature. Thus, assuming that a security level of five would be encoded as its binary representation (101_2), then the values encoded into the digital signature as e^1 , e^2 , and e^3 would be 1, 0, and 1, respectively.

By way of further example, assume that the values of the fifteen integers e^i are as indicated in Table I below.

Table I

Integer	Value
e^1	3
e^2	5
e^3	7
e^4	11
e^5	13
e^6	17
e^7	19
e^8	23
e^9	29
e^{10}	31
e^{11}	37
e^{12}	41
e^{13}	43
e^{14}	47
e^{15}	53

Using the values listed in Table I, the value of encoding 248 would be $3 \cdot 11 \cdot 29 \cdot 41$, the product of which is 39,237. Similarly, the value of encoding 250 would be $5 \cdot 7 \cdot 13 \cdot 17 \cdot 19 \cdot 23 \cdot 31 \cdot 37 \cdot 43 \cdot 47 \cdot 53$, the product of which is 11,223,947,638,085.

Certifying authority 108 uses this value e with encoded information to sign the blind certificate it receives from client device 102. Certifying authority 108

1 from certifying authority 108. Given the attributes that client device 102 claims to
2 have, and the encodings used by certifying authority 108 in signing client
3 certificates, content server 104 can readily determine whether the attributes
4 encoded in the digital signature match the claimed attributes. For example, using
5 the encodings a proposed value of e can be generated based on the claimed
6 attributes. This proposed value of e can then be used, in conjunction with the
7 public key portion n received from certifying authority 108, to verify the signature
8 of the certificate.

9 If the claimed attributes are not verified, then content server 104 can refuse
10 to provide content to client device 102. However, if the claimed attributes are
11 verified, then content server 104 transmits the requested content 240 to client
12 device 102. What content and/or how the content is transmitted to client device
13 102 can vary depending on the attributes of client device 102. For example, a fee
14 may or may not be imposed, a particular quality level of content may be
15 transmitted, confirmation from client device 102 of additional security precautions
16 that must be taken, a licensing agreement accepted, etc.

17 Fig. 6 is a flowchart illustrating an exemplary process for generating a new
18 blindly signed certificate in accordance with one implementation of the invention.
19 Steps on the left side of Fig. 6 are implemented by client device 102 of Figs. 1 and
20 4, while steps on the right side of Fig. 6 are implemented by certifying authority
21 108 of Figs. 1 and 4. The process of Fig. 6 may be performed in software. Fig. 6
22 is described with additional reference to components in Figs. 1 and 4.

23 Initially, client device 102 and certifying authority 108 establish a secure
24 connection between each other (steps 252 and 254) based on the client's previous
25 certificate (so that the certifying authority knows the correct attributes to encode

1 into the new certificate). Client 102 then constructs a new public/private key pair
2 (step 256). Client 102 then constructs a new certificate by replacing the public
3 key in its current certificate with the new public key, and blinds the new certificate
4 (step 258). Client 102 sends the blinded certificate to certifying authority 108
5 (step 260). Certifying authority 108 receives the blinded certificate (step 262) and
6 signs the blinded certificate encoding attributes into the signature based on the
7 previous certificate (step 264).

8 Certifying authority 108 then sends the signed blinded certificate to client
9 device 102 (step 266). Client device 102 receives the signed blinded certificate
10 (step 268), and unblinds the signed blinded certificate to generate the signed
11 certificate (step 270).

12 Fig. 7 is a flowchart illustrating an exemplary process for obtaining content
13 using a new signed certificate in accordance with one implementation of the
14 invention. Steps on the left side of Fig. 7 are implemented by client device 102 of
15 Figs. 1 and 4, while steps on the right side of Fig. 7 are implemented by content
16 server 104 of Figs. 1 and 4. The process of Fig. 7 may be performed in software.
17 Fig. 7 is described with additional reference to components in Figs. 1 and 4.

18 Initially, client device 102 generates a content request (step 282). This may
19 be automatically generated by client device 102 or alternatively may be in
20 response to a user request at client device 102. Client 102 sends the request and
21 current certificate 114 (signed by certifying authority 108) to content server 104
22 (step 284).

23 Content server 104 receives the request and signed certificate (step 286),
24 and identifies the attributes encoded in the signature (step 288). Content server
25 104 then checks whether the attributes in the certificate match the attributes

1 encoded in the signature (step 290). If the attributes do not match, then the
2 process stops (step 292), and content server 104 does not provide the requested
3 content to client device 102. Content server 104 assumes that if the attributes do
4 not match, the certificate has been tampered with and thus the certificate and client
5 device 102 are not trustworthy. Thus, the content of the certificate is “controlled”
6 – any attempts by a user to alter the certificate (e.g., to increase the security level
7 of his or her device) would be detected.

8 However, if the attributes match, then content server 104 decides, based on
9 the attributes, whether to supply content, how to supply content, and/or what
10 content to supply to client 102 (step 294). Server 104 then transmits the
11 appropriate content to client 102 (step 296), which receives the requested content
12 (step 298).

13 14 **Key Recovery**

15 Returning to Fig. 1, a new key pair for client device 102 can be generated
16 by key pair generator 116. Generator 116 includes a pseudo-random number
17 generator that produces a string of “random” numbers based on a fixed initial seed
18 value 120. Seed value 120 is fixed – it is stored in a manner so that it is not lost in
19 the event of a system failure (e.g., it may be programmed into a nonvolatile read
20 only memory). The state of the pseudo-random number generator is saved after a
21 random number is generated so that the next time a random number is to be
22 generated it can pick up from its most recent state. The pseudo-random number
23 generator uses a fixed algorithm(s) to generate its “random” number output, such
24 as RC4, available from RSA Security, Inc. of Bedford, MA.

1 To generate a new key pair, generator 116 generates two random integers
2 (via the pseudo-random number generator) and begins testing each integer, as well
3 as the successors of each, for primality. The order in which successors are tested
4 is fixed (and thus can be subsequently duplicated if necessary, as discussed in
5 more detail below). Any of a wide variety of conventional techniques can be used
6 to test for primality, such as the well-known Miller-Rabin or Solovay-Strassen
7 techniques. Once a prime number has been identified from each sequence (which
8 are the values p and q of the private key), the value of n for the public key can be
9 readily generated by multiplying the two prime numbers.

10 Situations can arise where client 102 needs to re-generate previously
11 generated public/private key pairs. For example, a failure of client device 102 at
12 an inopportune moment may cause client 102 to lose its private key (e.g., erased
13 from memory) and/or the random number generator to lose its current state. In
14 such situations, client 102 re-starts its key pair generation process with seed value
15 120 to bring key pair generator 116 back to its previous state.

16 Fig. 8 is a flowchart illustrating an exemplary process for restoring key pair
17 generator 116 to its proper state according to one embodiment of the invention.
18 The process of Fig. 8 is implemented by client device 102 of Figs. 1, and may be
19 performed in software. Fig. 8 is described with additional reference to
20 components in Fig. 1.

21 Initially, generator 116 generates a public/private key pair based on its seed
22 value 120 (step 312). Because the seed value 120 has not changed and the
23 algorithm(s) for generating the prime numbers of the private key are fixed, each
24 time that generator 116 generates a public/private key pair using its seed value 120
25 the same public/private key pair will be generated. Generator 116 then requests a

1 valid certificate for the generated public key (step 314). This request is made to a
2 certificate server or archive, which is archive 130 in the illustrated example of
3 Fig. 1.

4 The certificate server or archive will check whether a valid certificate exists
5 for the public key and return either the valid certificate or an indication that no
6 such certificate exists. Generator 116 checks whether it receives a valid certificate
7 or an indication that no such certificate exists (step 316). If a valid certificate
8 exists, then its state has been restored (step 318). However, if no such certificate
9 exists then generator 116 generates another public/private key pair (step 320).
10 Eventually, a valid certificate will be received and the state of generator 116
11 restored (step 318).

12 Conclusion

13 Thus, the invention provides controlled-content recoverable blinded
14 certificates. A client device can readily create a new public key with a digital
15 signature from a certifying authority and with security attributes of the client
16 device advantageously encoded into the digital signature. A blinding process is
17 used to blind the public key for signature, thereby preventing the certifying
18 authority from tracking the client device based on the relationship between its
19 previous public key and its new public key. A content server can use these
20 encoded security attributes to determine whether and how to provide requested
21 electronic content to the client device. Additionally, according to one aspect of
22 the invention, the client device uses a fixed algorithm and a fixed seed value to
23 generate public/private key pairs, thereby advantageously allowing the client
24 device to recover from a failure during the process of changing its public key.
25

1 Although the invention has been described in language specific to structural
2 features and/or methodological steps, it is to be understood that the invention
3 defined in the appended claims is not necessarily limited to the specific features or
4 steps described. Rather, the specific features and steps are disclosed as preferred
5 forms of implementing the claimed invention.

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1 **CLAIMS**

2

3 1. A system supporting public key encryption, the system comprising:

4 a certifying authority;

5 a client device, coupled to the certifying authority, to,

6 generate a blinded certificate including a public key, and

7 transmit the blinded certificate to the certifying authority; and

8 wherein the certifying authority is to digitally sign the blinded certificate

9 and encode security attributes of the client device into the digital signature.

10

11 2. A system as recited in claim 1, wherein the client device is further to

12 receive the blinded certificate and generate a signed certificate by unblinding the

13 signed blinded certificate.

14

15 3. A system as recited in claim 1, further comprising a content server

16 coupled to provide electronic content to the client device

17

18 4. A system as recited in claim 3, wherein the client device is further to

19 generate a signed certificate by unblinding the signed blinded certificate and to

20 transfer the signed certificate to the content server, and wherein the content server

21 is to check security attributes of the client device based on attributes encoded into

22 the digital signature and to determine how to respond to the request based on the

23 security attributes.

24

25

1 5. A system as recited in claim 4, wherein the content server can
2 respond by doing one or more of the following: determining whether to deliver
3 the requested content, determining what quality of content to deliver, or
4 determining what additional security precautions to require of the client device.

5
6 6. A system as recited in claim 1, wherein the certifying authority is to
7 digitally sign the blinded certificate according to a formula

$$8 \qquad \qquad \qquad (\text{blinded certificate})^d \bmod (n),$$

9 wherein d represents a private key of the certifying authority and wherein n
10 is a product of two prime numbers that comprise the private key.

11
12 7. A system as recited in claim 6, wherein the certifying authority is to
13 encode a security attribute into the digital signature by:

14 representing the security attributes as a series of bits;

15 identifying, for each bit in the series that has a particular value, a
16 corresponding integer; and

17 generating as the value d the product of the identified integers.

18
19 8. A system as recited in claim 7, wherein the certifying authority is
20 further to generate another digital signature for the blinded certificate by:

21 additionally identifying, for each bit in the series that has another value, a
22 corresponding integer; and

23 generating as the value d for the other digital signature the product of the
24 additionally identified integers.
25

1 **9.** A method comprising:
2 receiving, from a client, a current certificate and a request to sign a new
3 certificate;
4 determining attributes of the client based on the current certificate;
5 selecting, in accordance with public key cryptography, a public/private key
6 pair that is based at least in part on the attributes of the client; and
7 digitally signing the new certificate using the selected private key.

8
9 **10.** A method as recited in claim 9, wherein the attributes are security
10 attributes of the client.

11
12 **11.** A method as recited in 9, wherein the new certificate is a blinded
13 certificate.

14
15 **12.** A method as recited in 9, further comprising determining additional
16 information to encode into the digital signature, and wherein the selecting further
17 comprises selecting the public/private key pair based on the attributes of the client
18 and the additional information.

19
20 **13.** A method as recited in 9, wherein the selecting comprises
21 determining a bit pattern that corresponds to the security attributes of the client,
22 and identifying a public/private key pair that corresponds to the bit pattern.

1 **14.** A method as recited in claim 9, wherein the digitally signing
2 comprises calculating a value of a formula

$$(blinded\ certificate)^d \bmod (n),$$

3
4 wherein d represents a private key of a device performing the digital
5 signing and wherein n is a product of two prime numbers that comprise the private
6 key.

7
8 **15.** A method as recited in claim 14, wherein the selecting comprises:
9 representing the attributes as a series of bits;
10 identifying, for each bit in the series that has a particular value, a
11 corresponding integer; and
12 generating as the value d the product of the identified integers.

13
14 **16.** A method as recited in claim 15, further comprising generating
15 another digital signature for the blinded certificate by:
16 additionally identifying, for each bit in the series that has another value, a
17 corresponding integer; and
18 generating as the value d for the other digital signature the product of the
19 additionally identified integers.

20
21 **17.** One or more computer-readable memories containing a computer
22 program that is executable by a processor to perform the method recited in claim
23 9.

1 **18.** An apparatus to digitally sign electronic information, the apparatus
2 comprising:

3 a connection module to establish a secure connection with a client device;
4 a signature module to receive electronic information from the client device
5 and digitally sign the electronic information, encoding attributes of the client
6 device into the digital signature.

7
8 **19.** An apparatus as recited in claim 18, wherein the attributes are
9 security attributes of the client device.

10
11 **20.** An apparatus as recited in claim 18, further comprising a certificate
12 archive that stores currently valid certificates issued by the apparatus, and wherein
13 the apparatus is further to receive a public key, check whether the certificate
14 archive stores a currently valid certificate corresponding to the public key, and
15 respond to the request based on the results of the checking.

16
17 **21.** A method comprising:
18 receiving, from a client, a request for electronic content;
19 checking, based on information encoded in a digital signature of at least a
20 portion of the request, whether the client has a set of claimed security attributes;
21 and
22 determining how to respond to the request based on the checking.

1 **22.** A method as recited in claim 21, wherein the determining how to
2 respond comprises one or more of: determining what quality level of content to
3 provide, determining what type of payment to require, and determining what
4 additional security precautions are required on the part of the client.

5
6 **23.** A method as recited in claim 21, wherein the checking comprises
7 determining a public key based on the set of claimed security attributes, and using
8 the public key to verify the digital signature.

9
10 **24.** A method as recited in claim 21, wherein the checking comprises:
11 representing the set of claimed security attributes as a series of bits;
12 generating a public key for a certifying authority using the series of bits;
13 and
14 using the public key to verify the digital signature.

15
16 **25.** A method as recited in claim 24, wherein the generating comprises:
17 identifying, for each bit in the series that has a particular value, a
18 corresponding integer; and
19 generating as the public key the product of the identified integers.

20
21 **26.** One or more computer-readable memories containing a computer
22 program that is executable by a processor to perform the method recited in claim
23 21.
24
25

1 **27.** A method comprising:
2 generating a public/private key pair for use in public key cryptography;
3 creating a certificate including the public key;
4 transmitting the certificate to a certificate archive; and
5 receiving, from the certificate archive, an indication of whether the
6 certificate is currently valid.

7
8 **28.** One or more computer-readable memories containing a computer
9 program that is executable by a processor to perform the method recited in claim
10 28.

11
12 **29.** A method for recovering from a device failure in a public key
13 encryption system, the method comprising the following acts:

- 14 (a) generating a public/private key pair using a fixed algorithm and a
15 fixed seed value;
16 (b) creating a certificate incorporating the public key;
17 (c) querying a certificate archive as to whether the certificate is valid;
18 (d) if the certificate is not valid, then generating a new public/private
19 key pair using the fixed algorithm and based on the public key;
20 (e) repeating acts (b) – (d) until a valid certificate is created.

21
22 **30.** One or more computer-readable memories containing a computer
23 program that is executable by a processor to perform the method recited in claim
24 29.
25

1 **ABSTRACT**

2 In a cryptographic system, a certificate is used to provide information
3 regarding a client device. The certificate is blindly signed by a certifying authority
4 to preserve the anonymity of the client device. However, information is encoded
5 into the signature so that a content server can readily verify security attributes of
6 the client device and make decisions regarding the delivery of electronic content to
7 the client device based on those security attributes.

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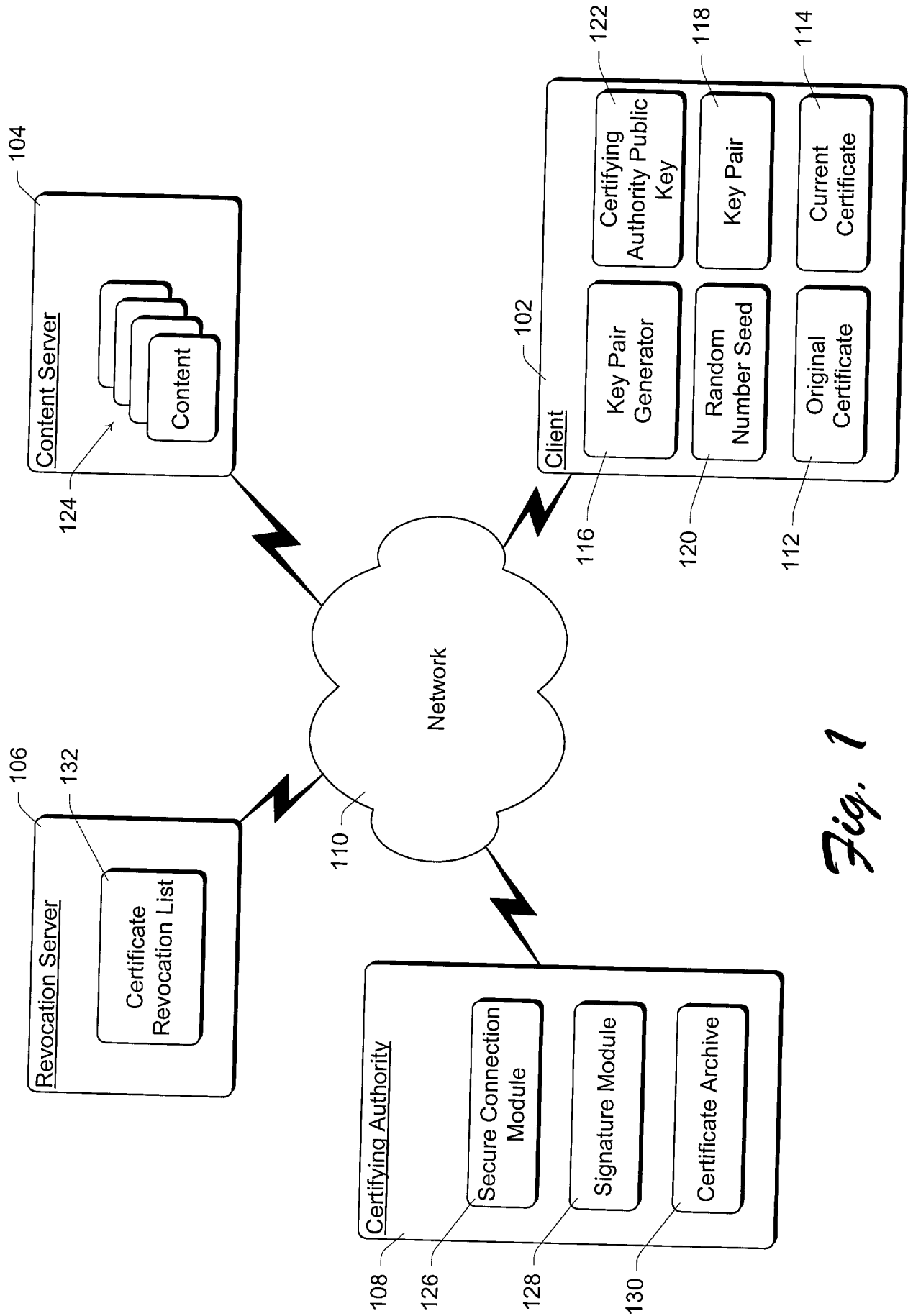
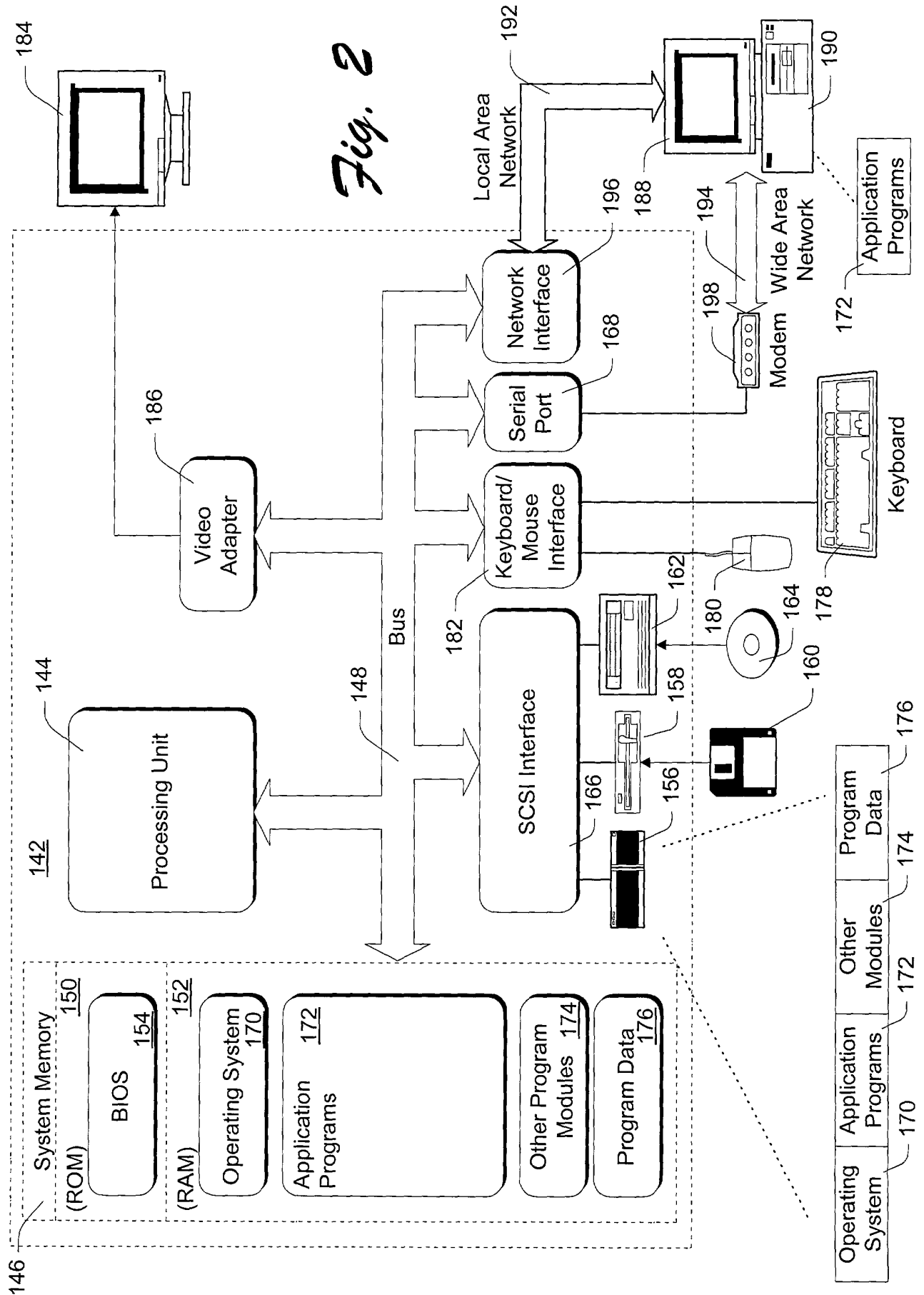


Fig. 1

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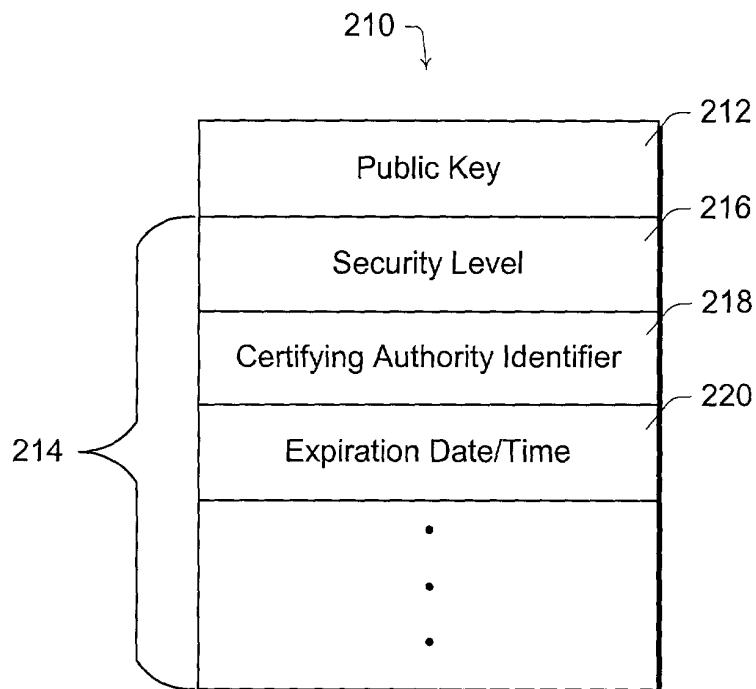


Fig. 3

248

$$e^1 e^4 e^9 e^{12} = 100100001001000$$

250

$$e^2 e^3 e^5 e^6 e^7 e^8 e^{10} e^{11} e^{13} e^{14} e^{15} = 011011110110111$$

Fig. 5

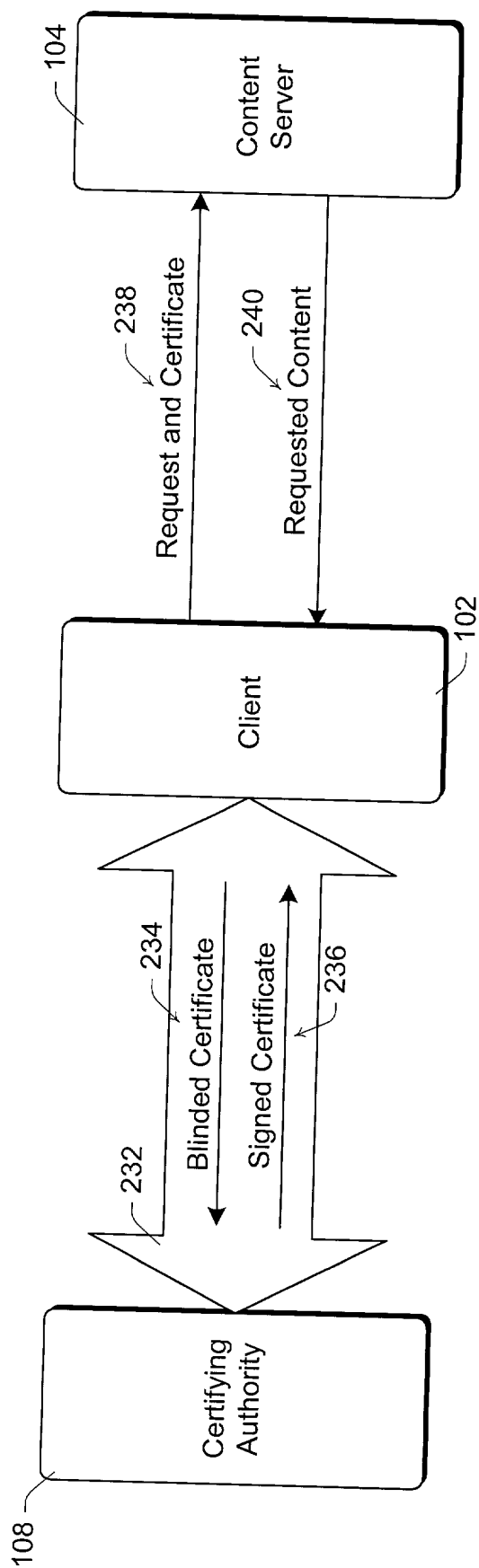
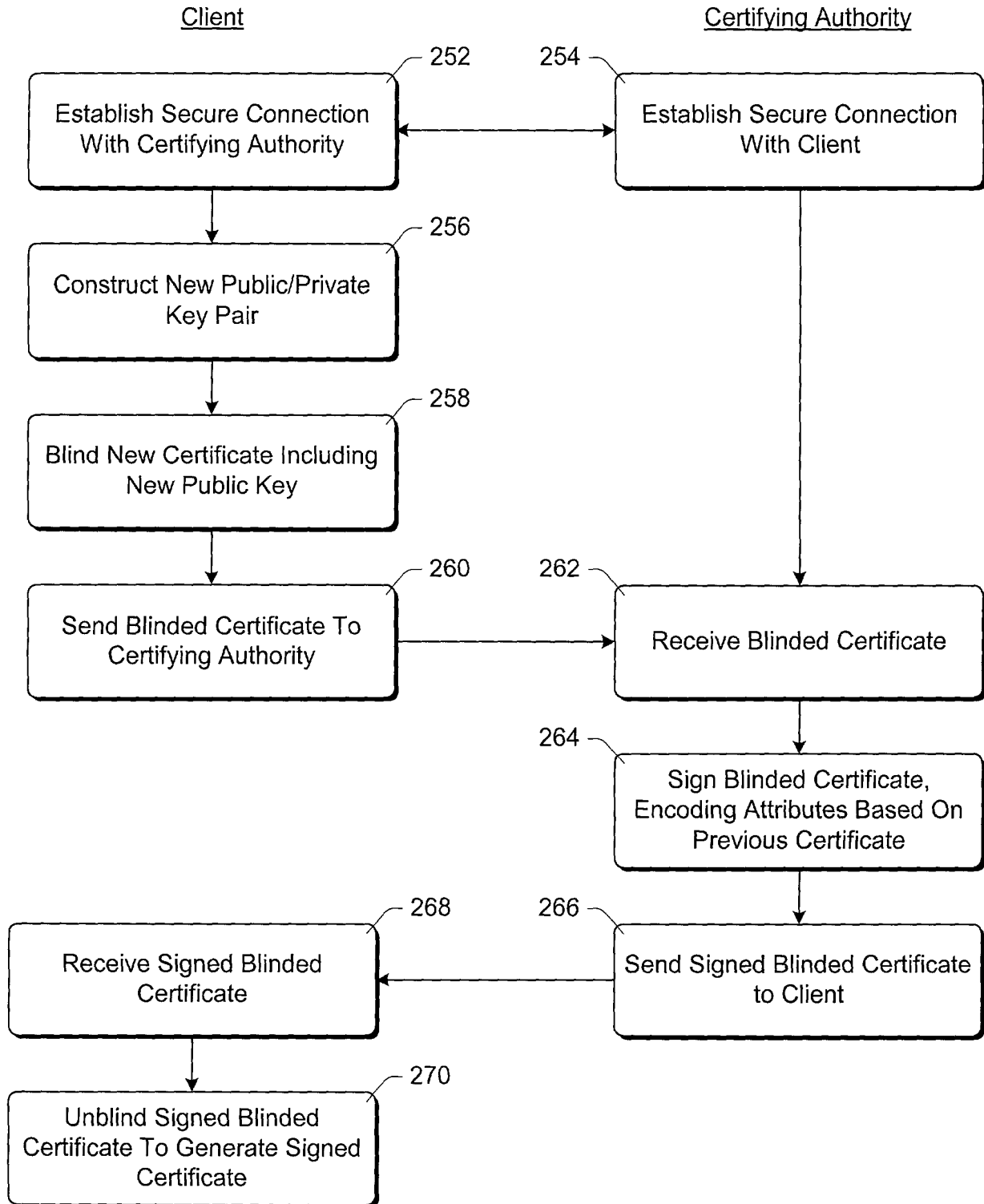
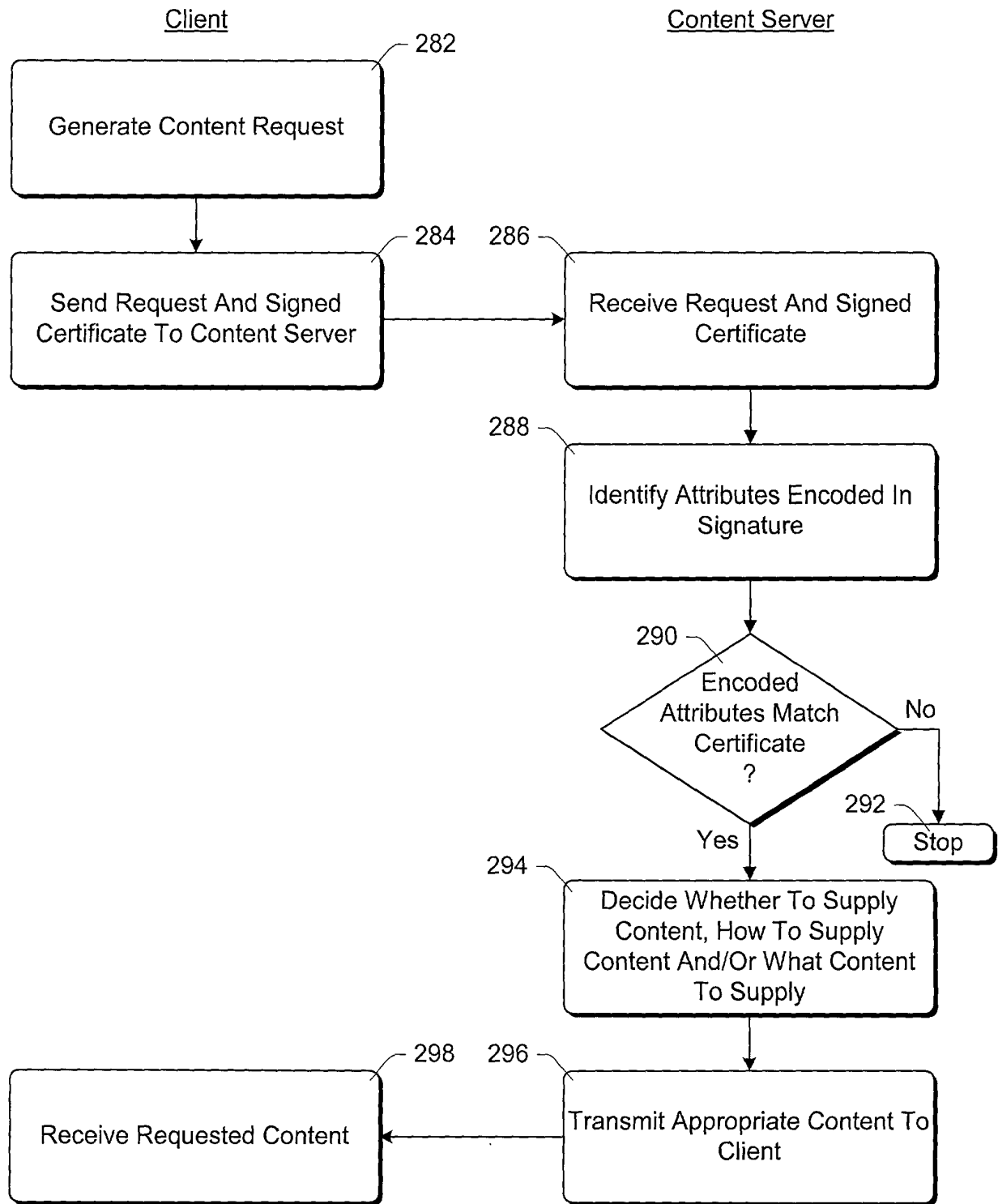
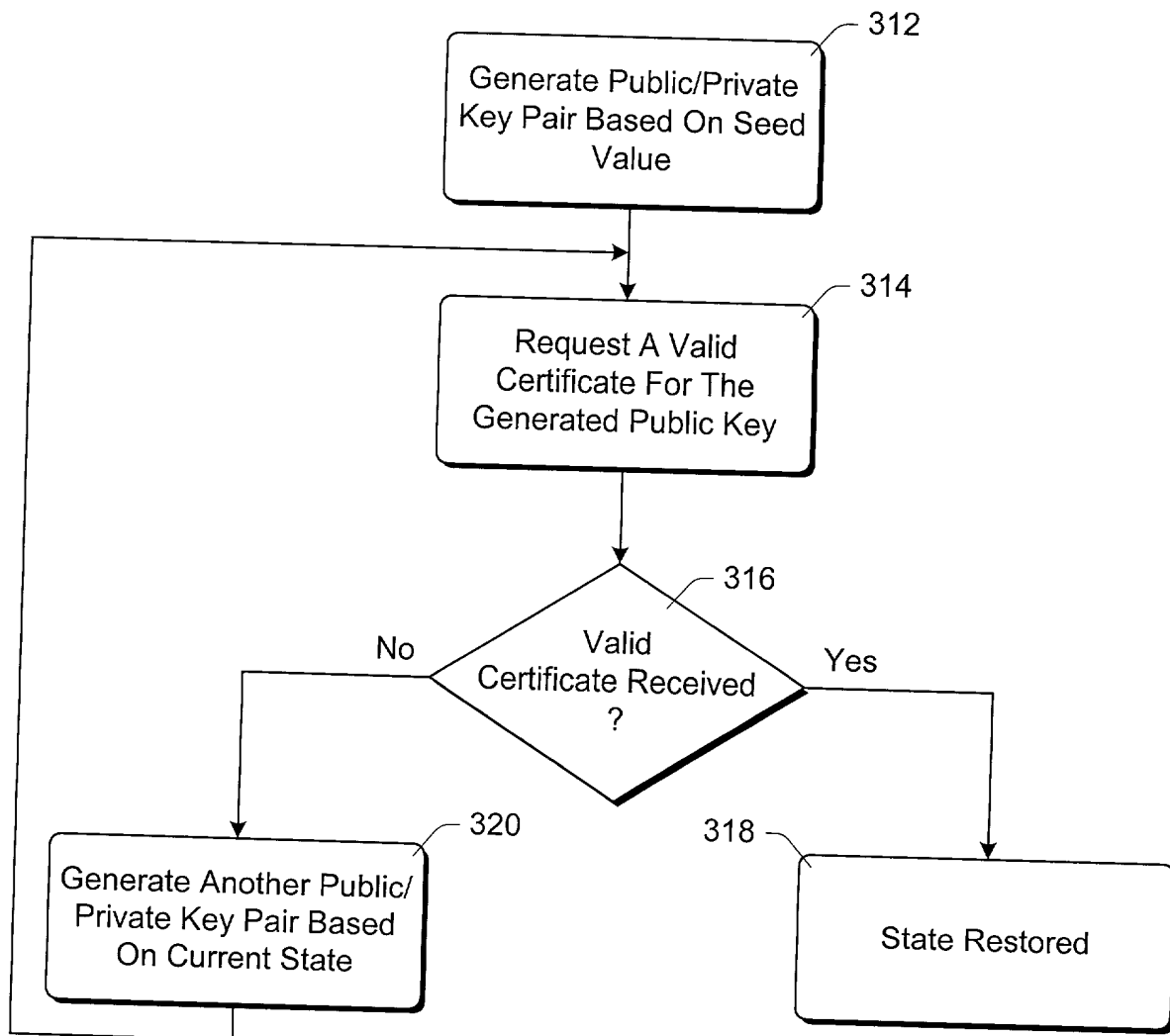


Fig. 4

*Fig. 6*

*Fig. 7*

*Fig. 8*

1 **IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE**

2 Inventorship..... Simon
3 Applicant Microsoft Corporation
4 Attorney's Docket No. MS1-406US
5 Title: Controlled-Content Recoverable Blinded Certificates

6 **DECLARATION FOR PATENT APPLICATION**

7 As a below named inventor, I hereby declare that:

8 My residence, post office address and citizenship are as stated below next to
9 my name.

10 I believe I am the original, first and sole inventor (if only one name is listed
11 below) or an original, first and joint inventor (if plural names are listed below) of the
12 subject matter which is claimed and for which a patent is sought on the invention
13 entitled "Controlled-Content Recoverable Blinded Certificates," the specification of
14 which is attached hereto.

15 I have reviewed and understand the content of the above-identified
16 specification, including the claims.

17 I acknowledge the duty to disclose information which is material to the
18 examination of this application in accordance with Title 37, Code of Federal
19 Regulations, § 1.56(a).

20 PRIOR FOREIGN APPLICATIONS: no applications for foreign patents or
21 inventor's certificates have been filed prior to the date of execution of this
22 declaration.

23 **Power of Attorney**

24 I appoint the following attorneys to prosecute this application and transact all
25 future business in the Patent and Trademark Office connected with this application:
26 Lewis C. Lee, Reg. No. 34,656; Daniel L. Hayes, Reg. No. 34,618; Allan T.

1 Sponseller, Reg. 38,318; Steven R. Sponseller, Reg. No. 39,384; James R.
2 Banowsky, Reg. No. 37,773; Lance R. Sadler, Reg. No. 38,605; Michael A. Proksch,
3 Reg. No. 43,021; Thomas A. Jolly, Reg. No. 39,241; David A. Morasch, Reg. No.
4 42,905; Kasey C. Christie, Reg. No. 40,559; Katie E. Sako, Reg. No. 32,628 and
5 Daniel D. Crouse, Reg. No. 32,022.

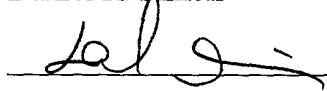
6 Send correspondence to: LEE & HAYES, PLLC, 421 W. Riverside Avenue,
7 Suite 500, Spokane, Washington, 99201. Direct telephone calls to: Allan T.
8 Sponseller (509) 324-9256.

9
10 All statements made herein of my own knowledge are true and that all
11 statements made on information and belief are believed to be true; and further that
12 these statements were made with the knowledge that willful false statements and the
13 like so made are punishable by fine or imprisonment, or both, under Section 1001 of
14 Title 18 of the United States Code and that such willful false statement may
15 jeopardize the validity of the application or any patent issued therefrom.

16
17 * * * * *

18 Full name of inventor: Daniel R. Simon

19 Inventor's Signature



Date: Apr 4/00

20 Residence:

Redmond, WA

21 Citizenship:

Canada

22 Post Office Address:

16340 NE 83rd St., Apt. E227
Redmond, WA 98052